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Prologue

A month doesn't go by where I'm not asked about the Doors.

This has been going on for 50 years.

I first heard them at Fairfax High School in West Hollywood on Burbank-based AM radio station KBLA, on deejay Dave Diamond's *Diamond Mine* shift. He constantly spun the acetate of their debut long-player in December 1966.

The erudite radio broadcaster explained weekly the origin of their name from the title of a book by Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*, derived from a line in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

I loved when Diamond segued from "Soul Kitchen" to "Twentieth Century Fox." Some of it sounded like the music they had on KGFJ-AM, my R&B channel, and KBCA-FM, the jazz station. "Break On Through (To the Other Side)" reminded me of Ray Charles's "What'd I Say," from the 1963 Kenny Burrell and Jimmy Smith jazz-arrangement recording of his tune on the Verve label.

I purchased *The Doors* in monaural on the Elektra label that January of 1967 at The Frigate record shop on Crescent Heights and Third Street. I had no idea as a teenager that The Frigate was literally right near the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi-founded Third Street Meditation Center, where Ray Manzarek initially met John Densmore and Robby Krieger in 1965, soon introducing the duo to his buddy Jim Morrison.


In very late 1965 I was at my friend David Wolfe's house on Selmarine Drive in Culver City when the Doors appeared on the 90-minute 10:00 p.m. talk television *The Joe Pyne Show* on KTTV channel 11. We both seem to remember the confrontational host in a heated dialogue with Morrison in Pyne's Beef Box.

I then saw the Doors in January 1967 on the Casey Kasem-hosted afternoon television show *Shebang!* In July I caught the Doors on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. I danced occasionally on both Hollywood-based programs between 1965 and 1967.

On April 9, 1967, my cousin Sheila Kubernick telephoned me very late at night. She had just returned from the Cheetah Club in Venice and witnessed the Doors in person. Sheila, a Cher look-alike at the time, was still in a trance, courtesy of Morrison. Sheila later drove my brother Kenny and me to the Valley Music Center for a concert by the Seeds, still reminiscing about the Doors.

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Promotional Handbill courtesy Kirk Silsbee

I went to the Doors concert at the Forum in Inglewood, California, on December 14, 1968. On the show were Jerry Lee Lewis, Sweetwater, and Tzon Yen Luie, who performed with a Chinese stringed instrument, the pipa. I am still recovering from that rendition of “Celebration of the Lizard” and the Doors performing with a string and brass section.

In 1973, I coordinated two accredited upper-division English and music curriculum courses conducted by Dr. James L. Wheeler, assistant professor in the School of Literature at California State University, San Diego. A story in the April 14, 1973, issue of *Billboard* magazine hailed the department’s academic aim as “the world’s first university level rock studies program.”

I placed Jim Morrison’s *The Lords and the New Creatures* on the required book list. Manzarek heard about our classes and was very complimentary about students seriously studying Jim as a poet, along with the musical works of Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, Jefferson Airplane, the Beatles, Neil Young, and the Doors. One evening, Ray and trusted associate Danny Sugerman made arrangements for me to screen the existing print of Morrison’s *Feast of Friends* movie on campus.

I met Ray in 1974 and interviewed him at Mercury Records on Hollywood Boulevard. I must have interviewed Manzarek a couple of dozen times over 40 years.

I later stumbled across Jim Morrison’s grieving partner, Pamela Courson, in April 1974 at a record label party at Danny Sugerman’s Laurel Canyon home.

In 1978 Danny Sugerman was a guest on my television program *50/50*, broadcast on Z Channel, public access and Manhattan cable, promoting his just-published book with Jerry Hopkins, *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, the first biography of Jim Morrison. Our half-hour interview was utilized as a prototype Electronic Press Kit by Warner Books advancing Sugerman’s book tour.

Record producer Michael Lloyd, musician/songwriter Todd Rundgren and deejay Murray the K were guests on other episodes. I unearthed from Murray’s archives a video copy of the Doors’

“People Are Strange” from his *Murray the K in New York* 1967 TV series and aired it.

All during the '80s, Manzarek played piano and organ on a few albums I produced and spoken-word and keyboard collaborations I presented in Santa Monica at McCabe's Guitar Shop with Michael C Ford, Michael McClure and Allen Ginsberg. He lauded my literary work and productions in Westwood on the grounds of UCLA at the Cooperage, Kerckhoff Coffee House and Schoenberg Hall.

In 1990 I served as the project coordinator of *The Jack Kerouac Box* set and invited Manzarek, Allen Ginsberg, Jerry Garcia, Michael C Ford and Michael McClure to contribute to the package booklet liner notes.

In July 1995 in Los Angeles at the MET Theatre on Oxford Avenue I produced and co-curated with director Darrell Larson a month-long *Rock and Roll in Literature* series at the venue. Manzarek, Densmore and Krieger reunited and played “Peace Frog,” “Love Me Two Times” and “Little Red Rooster” on July 8. Kirk Silsbee read from Art Pepper's *Straight Life*, John Densmore did an entry from his new novel, and Michael Ontkian recited *Ode to L.A.* by Jim Morrison.

Densmore, on another night, with Paul Lacques, Barbara Williams, Billy Mernit and Andy Krikun performed the work of Bob Dylan with selections from *The Basement Tapes* and *Tarantula*.

Mick Farren, Don Waller, Tim Curry, David Ritz, Roger Steffens, Lewis MacAdams, David Leaf, Bill Pullman, Paul Body, Ed Harris, MET event associate producer Daniel Weizmann and I also shared reflections during July 1995 on Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Bob Marley, Motown and The Band.

During 1996 I produced Ray's double CD audio biography, *The Doors: Myth and Reality—The Spoken Word History*. I'm also cited in the dedication page of Ray's autobiography, *Light My Fire: My Life with the Doors*.

In addition, Manzarek penned the introduction to my 2009 coffee table book, *Canyon of Dreams: The Magic and the Music*

of *Laurel Canyon*. He graciously joined me for California book-signing events in Oakland and San Francisco.

In 2011, Ray, Doors engineer/producer Bruce Botnick, Elliott Lefko of the AEG/Golden Voice company and I took part in a featured panel discussion in the second annual Pollstar Live! Conference, *The Doors—An L.A. Legacy*, held at the Marriott Hotel at L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles..

In early 2013 Ray emailed me comments for a book my brother Kenneth and I did with photographer Guy Webster, *BIG SHOTS: Rock Legends and Hollywood Icons*. Guy took the photos of *The Doors* LP. John and Robby also provided memories to our Webster text.

My 2014 book *Turn Up the Radio! Rock, Pop and Roll in Los Angeles 1956–1972* is dedicated to Manzarek.

Over the decades I conducted multiple interviews with Manzarek, Densmore and Krieger, who were always accessible and generous with their time and responses. I also interviewed Bruce Botnick, Jac Holzman and Paul A. Rothchild.

As my '60s record album collection grew, it was Ray who turned me on to Bobby Timmons, McCoy Tyner and John Coltrane. John pointed me to Elvin Jones, Chico Hamilton and Fred Katz; Robby alerted me to the Paul Butterfield Blues Band; Bruce engineered and helmed albums by Love; and Jac brought me many vinyl pleasures from his monumental Elektra label.

Jim Morrison made me check out William Blake, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Anaïs Nin, Aldous Huxley and foreign films with subtitles advertised at the single-screen Toho La Brea Theatre.

I had a wonderful lunch and guidance-counselor session with multi-instrumentalist Chris Darrow in 1996 at Ray Manzarek's house in Beverly Hills. Ray dug the Kaleidoscope, a band Chris co-founded, and Chris liked the Doors, whom he caught in 1966 at the Whisky a Go Go.

Chris suggested, "Consider being a bandleader like Duke Ellington." And Ray added, "Yeah, man. Be like the arranger Billy Strayhorn."

Darrow further mandated, “You’re gonna have an audience one day that reads your books. It’s like building a repertoire. Sometimes it takes 20 years to get the specific charts you want played, recorded and eventually heard.”

And so I’ve decided to be the bandleader and arranger.

A few years ago I began researching, writing and assembling a book on the Doors. I was encouraged by many friends and fans of the Doors who were reading articles I had written in now-defunct magazines and periodicals over the years that were now circulating on the internet.

Summer’s Gone is a compilation of raw-transcript interviews with Doors principals Ray, John and Robby, my 1974–2018 reviews of the band’s catalog product, and stories, some published and many never in print or online, and requested reflections over five decades, from intimate Doors insiders, poets, writers, musicians, engineers, songwriters, authors, screenwriters, filmmakers and photographers. I imagine this book could be a necessary resource for future biographers.

On January 28, 2018, I attended the memorial tribute and service to Rabbi Isaiah “Shy” Zeldin at the Stephen Wise Temple in the Bel-Air neighborhood of Southern California. Rabbi Eli Herscher praised Zeldin’s spiritual and visionary leadership in 1964 as he established an open-minded religious and musical community in the region, a mile from the UCLA campus where Manzarek and Morrison were then enrolled as students. From the Bima, Herscher politely encouraged the congregation of mourners “that today, memory is the only agenda.”

This directive applies to our shared experiences with the Doors in these pages.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s Library & Archives on July 10, 2017, invited me to be a guest speaker in their Author Series in Cleveland, Ohio. Before my appearance, one of the curatorial assistants took me into the private air-conditioned storage locker room not open to the viewing public. “We knew you were coming today and pulled out some specific items we wanted you to see.”

I was given an envelope containing Jim Morrison's UCLA diploma. It was a signal. I was the showrunner and had been handed the baton at Drake Stadium to finish this 440-yard relay race multi-voice narrative mission.

I initially aimed for a 2016 book publication date that was moved to the 2017 schedule. As I was preparing the manuscript and acquiring photos, it was announced that the Doors were planning a slew of 50th-anniversary products and publicity campaigns during 2017.

Instead of capitalizing on this landmark milestone, publisher Travis Pike made the wise decision to let them take this well-deserved team retail victory lap, and our book would be scheduled for February 12, 2018, Ray Manzarek's birthday.

Then just as we were going to press, in December 2017, we got the news that *The Doors: Live at the Isle of Wight 1970* DVD, their last concert performance ever filmed, was shipping on February 23, 2018.

It was jazz pianist, composer, community activist and bandleader Horace Tapscott, who formed the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra in 1961, who mentioned to me in 1992 at the California African American Museum that "we are not in competition but in collaboration."

I'm from a world of respecting my elders and certainly wasn't gonna jump in front of this long-awaited filmic summary of the Doors' career. And on February 26, my birthday, the time of hesitation is finally through, and you can discover this trip as the first flash of March is upon us.

Harvey Kubernik
February 28, 2018
Los Angeles, California